



## Rift Valley Local Empowerment for Peace

### What is the Rift Valley Local Empowerment for Peace Program?

Rift Valley Local Empowerment for Peace is a peace building and reconstruction program that began in 2009 in the wake of post-election violence in 2007-2008. The program works to bridge interethnic divisions and prevent violence from recurring. The intended impact of the LEAP program is increased stability in Kenya, which includes greater interaction and trust, and reduced incidence of violence amongst traditionally conflicting groups. To achieve this, LEAP works with youth to enhance their economic opportunities, strengthen local mechanisms and skills for conflict management, and promote social connections among youth across ethnic and other lines of division.



### Project Duration and Budget

April 2012 – July 2013

\$1.7 million

### Who implements the Rift Valley Local Empowerment for Peace Program?

Mercy Corps Kenya

<http://www.mercycorps.org/countries/kenya>

Wareng Youth Initiative for Peace and Development

Kericho Youth Centre

Peace Development Forum

### Where does the Rift Valley Local Empowerment for Peace Program work?

In eight districts of Rift Valley namely: Molo, Kericho East, Kericho West, Eldoret East, Wareng, Eldoret West, Keiyo and Nandi North.

### What does the Rift Valley Local Empowerment for Peace Program do?

The program is pursuing three related objectives; 1) strengthen sustainable mechanisms for conflict mitigation and reconciliation; 2) support community dialogues and implement joint development projects that build bridges among divided communities and demonstrate tangible benefits to coexistence; and 3) support youth integration through youth leadership training, small-scale Cash-for-Work community reconstruction projects, and income-generation activities.

### How is the Rift Valley Local Empowerment for Peace Program making a difference?

#### *Youth Mentoring & Income Generating Activities*

Over 700 hundred youth are participating in income generating activities, 481 of whom have completed leadership, consensus building and economic skills building training. In addition, 27 youth income generating activities have been linked with private sector mentors.

The mentorship of youth groups by the program's Youth Development Committees has been very successful, particularly in empowering female youth. For many years women have been underrepresented in leadership roles in their communities, but now, women in Nandi, Keiyo, Kericho and remote areas of Uasin Gishu and Molo who have been mentored themselves are now mentoring others. For example, a women-led youth group in Nandi North district has become known as the source for expert knowledge about poultry farming, and is now offering technical support and mentoring to youth in Uasin Gishu, Nandi North and Keiyo.

#### *Peace-building and Reconstruction Activities*

Sixty-three community reconstruction projects are under way in Nakuru, Kericho and Eldoret, reaching 6,400 people. The program has established and/or strengthened 13 District Peace Committees and 4,435 people have attended events geared towards strengthening understanding and mitigating conflict between groups.

In May 2012, the District Peace Committee of Nandi North was able to intervene in clashes that broke out in Muhoroni-Chemelil along the border of Rift Valley and Nyanza provinces. The Committee mobilized support of the Nandi Council of Elders to lead negotiations for peace with the Luo Council of Elders. This effort was complemented by the efforts of the Wareng Youth

Initiative for Peace who mobilized youth *bunges* (youth parliaments) along the border for dialogue. The result of these efforts was a halt in the conflict and the development of sustainable strategies for peace now being implemented in the run up to elections.

### **What key challenges does the Rift Valley Local Empowerment for Peace Program face?**

An increasingly charged political environment in the lead up to national elections in 2013 is putting pressure on some of the communities the program is working with. However, timely action by the District Peace Committees and the coordinated efforts of peace actors is helping leverage the gains made since post-election violence and prevent a reoccurrence.

### **The Rift Valley Local Empowerment for Peace Program in action**

*A victim herself of the violence in the Rift Valley, Mary Njoki made the conscious decision not to run away from Eldoret, but to stay and be a change agent.*

Mary Njoki, chairperson of the Wareng District Peace Committee in the Rift Valley, works closely with Kalenjin and Kikuyu elders encouraging non-violence and peaceful coexistence. She received training from the Anglican Church of Kenya, Eldoret, as part of the USAID interfaith collaboration for peace. Her training was put to the test on December 10, 2010, when she learned of looming violence. She dropped her hoe, hopped onto a motorbike and rushed to Langas, 10 kilometers away, where angry youths had gathered. A dispute over the fare between four Kalenjin men and a Kikuyu matatu operator had turned violent. The passengers accused the driver of being a member of the outlawed Mungiki and beat the man to death. Members of the Kikuyu community were planning their revenge, threatening to kill at least ten members of the Kalenjin community. Mary urged the youth to choose a non-violent response by holding a peaceful demonstration around Eldoret town. They agreed. Mary and others then mobilized the affected communities and members to meet with the provincial administration to address the matter.

### **For more information:**

<http://www.mercycorps.org/countries/kenya>

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